

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for providing a program selected by a viewer from a plurality of sources, comprising:

5 a plurality of tuners coupled to receive incoming channel signals from the plurality of said sources, said tuners being operative for decoding said received channel signals;

a switch circuit coupled to receive the output signals from each of said tuners; and,

10 a controller coupled to said tuners and said switch circuit, said controller being operative for retrieving output signals representing the program selected by said viewer according to a predetermined channel map information.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a driving circuit for coupling the output signals of said switch circuit to a television set for display.

15 3. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a storage means coupled to said controller for storing said predetermined channel map information.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an input means for transmitting a viewer's request to said controller.

20 5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said channel map information comprises a list of channel station numbers associated with the plurality of said sources.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said controller associates with the plurality of said sources according to a numeric order.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said tuners receive said incoming channel signals from the group consisting of cable, antenna, satellite, telephone line, optical fiber, manual input median, and recorded medium.

8. A method for providing a desired television program among a plurality of sources to a television system, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of television programs from the plurality of said sources;

transmitting a request to switch from one television program to another television program selected by a viewer;

retrieving one of the television programs selected by said viewer from the plurality of sources according to a predetermined channel map information; and,

forwarding said retrieved television program to said television system for display.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said predetermined channel map information is prepared according the following steps:

scanning active input channel signals from the plurality of said sources;

interactively formatting said channel map information according to predetermined criteria; and,

storing said formatted channel map in a memory.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein said predetermined channel map information comprises a list of channel numbers corresponding to the plurality of said sources.

5 11. The method of claim 8, wherein the receiving step receives said television programs from the group consisting of cable, antenna, satellite, telephone line, optical fiber, manual input median, and recorded medium.

10 12. An apparatus for providing a program selected by a viewer among a plurality of different program sources to a television system, comprising:

a switch circuit having a plurality of input ports and an output port switchably coupled to receive incoming channel signals from the plurality of sources;

at least one tuner coupled to receive the output signals from said switch circuit, said tuner being operative for decoding the output signals from said switch circuit;

15 and,

a controller coupled to said switch circuit and said tuner for coupling the output signals indicative of the program selected by said viewer from said switch circuit to said tuner.

20 13. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a driving circuit for displaying the output signals of said tuner to said television set.

14. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising an input means for transmitting a viewer's request to said controller according to a predetermined channel map information.

5 15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said channel map information includes at least one channel number on which each program is to be displayed.

10 16. The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising a storage means in communication with said controller for storing said predetermined channel map information.

17. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a display unit for displaying a channel station number of the program selected by said viewer.

15 18. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said switch circuit receives said incoming channel signals from the group consisting of cable, antenna, satellite, telephone line, optical fiber, manual input median, and recorded medium.

19. A method of switching a channel among a plurality of different program sources according to a predetermined channel map, said channel map includes a list of channel numbers corresponding to the plurality of said sources, the method comprising the steps of:

5 enabling a user to designate a desired channel for viewing based on said predetermined channel map via user input means;

generating a channel-changing signal to a television set in response to the activation of a channel button on said input means;

switching, in response to said user, from a first channel to a second channel, which
10 corresponds to said desired channel;

decoding output signals from said second channel; and,

forwarding said decoded signals to said television system for display.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of formatting said
15 predetermined channel map information according the following steps:

scanning active input channel signals from the plurality of said sources;

interactively formatting said channel map information according to a user-defined ordering scheme; and,

storing said formatted channel map in a memory.